The Cleveland Museum of Art

Press Release

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CENTRAL EUROPEAN PRINTS BETWEEN THE WARS
July 13 - August 28, 1994

Central European Prints Between the Wars, an exhibition of rarely shown etchings, wood engravings, and other prints created between 1915 and 1940 by Hungarian, Czech, and Polish artists, many virtually unknown outside their native countries, will be exhibited from July 13 to August 28 in the Museum's Prints and Drawings Gallery 109. The thirty-five prints in the exhibition, drawn from the Museum's collection, include landscapes, scenes of rural life, portraits, and religious subjects. Twenty-five are by Hungarian artists, most given to the Museum by the United Hungarian Societies of Cleveland in 1925, with a few given by The Magyar Club of Cleveland in the 1930s. Sabine Kretzschmar, curatorial assistant in the Department of Prints and Drawings, selected these prints to complement the exhibition **Nineteenth-Century German, Austrian, and Hungarian Drawings from Budapest,** installed in adjacent galleries.

Most of the prints, although influenced by contemporary artistic trends, are in a conservative style; among a few by avant-garde artists are abstract compositions by László Moholy-Nagy and Sándor Bortnyik. Etching was a favorite means of expression for many of the Hungarian artists represented. The technique was used by Vilmos Aba-Novák for his self-portrait, István Szőnyi for scenes of rural life, and Gyula Derkovits, whose expressionistic work, Lamenting the Dead, mourns the losses of World War I. Pál Molnár's wood engravings of religious scenes reflect traditional artistic styles and subjects, as does Gyula Conrad's wood engraving of a room in a Hungarian home.

Wood engraving was the preferred medium of the Czech symbolist František Kobliha, who used it to dramatic effect in two boldly designed and imaginative prints, Riders to the Sea and Meditation. Max Švabinský, a leading Czech printmaker known for his landscapes and portraits, created a finely detailed woodcut portrait of the Czech painter Josef Manes. Also shown are three drypoints by Jolan Gross Bettleheim, a Czech-born American artist who studied in Budapest and worked in Cleveland from 1925 to 1938. Two of her prints--one depicting the bridges and landmarks of downtown Cleveland--were exhibited in the Museum's annual May Shows of works by Cleveland artists during the 1930s.

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